

Comparison of Health/Medical Informatics Curricula Against Multiple Sets of Professional Criteria

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ABSTRACT

This poster expands on a methodology presented at the 2003 International Medical Informatics Association (IMIA) Conference on Education by analyzing the match between four graduate informatics programs to both the IMIA Working Group for Education (WG1) recommendations and the Certified Professional in Healthcare Information Management Systems (CPHIMS) exam objectives published by the Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS). Similarities and differences among the programs and criteria are described.

BACKGROUND

As the field of information technology has evolved and its importance in healthcare has risen, so too have the type and number of graduate education programs available to the prospective student. Since the field of healthcare information management is so diverse, prospective students often have a difficult time analyzing the curricular content of the various programs. We propose a methodology where curricular content is mapped to criteria developed by professional organizations. Two such criteria sets are the objectives for the CPHIMS examination designed to assess management skills in health informatics appropriate for Chief Information Officers (CIO's) or similarly highly placed managers of health information systems, and the recommendations developed by the IMIA WG1.^{1,2} Our previous presentation assessed only the CPHIMS objectives.³

METHODS

Our methods included reviewing the online graduate catalogs of four programs for the course objectives and coursework requirements and comparing the program coursework requirements of the selected programs against the 69 CPHIMS exam certification objectives and the 44 IMIA WG1 recommendations. Each programs' course objectives were matched to both sets of criteria in one of three categories: core, elective, or internship courses and the percentages of objectives/recommendations addressed in each of those categories was tabulated.

This methodology was applied to four graduate-level education programs within the health/medical informatics field that varied in their emphasis on producing healthcare information management executives. Two of the programs have a mission to produce managers of healthcare information systems and are perhaps the only two current informatics masters programs with this goal. One of the programs is also an NLM-funded training site. The other two programs were selected from other NLM-funded training sites designed to produce healthcare information technology researchers and/developers.

Although the CPHIMS objectives are for a certification examination and the IMIA WG1 recommendations do not certify individuals or programs of a given field, they do offer a different perspective of objectives by which a program or prospective student might choose to assess a program curricula. The evaluation includes an assessment of where the two sets of criteria are, or are not in agreement with each other, the match of the different programs to each set of criteria, as well as an assessment of the reliability of the classification of both programs and criteria.

DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the United States Air Force, Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

REFERENCES

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